

American Opinion Summary

Department of State

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No. 157

February 26, 1963

CUBA

Vigorous debate on U.S. Cuba policy continues, with fresh interest stirred by the promised partial Soviet troop withdrawal and a MIG firing on an American fishing craft.

Critics charge that "there is no coherent and consistent Administration policy on Cuba worthy of bipartisan support" [Sen. Keating (R-N.Y.); Rep. Alger (R-Tex.); Rep. Ashbrook (R-O.); Henry J. Taylor, Ted Lewis of N.Y. News].

Sen. Stennis (D-Miss.) demands a "firm and hard" policy to "wipe out" Communist Cuba. Writing in The Commonwealth, William V. Shannon concludes that having erred in not going "all out" in the Bay of Pigs venture, and the Alliance for Progress, "important as it is," being "not an answer to Castro," Washington "now has no policy except to hope that somehow time and events will cause the Castro regime to disappear."

Some ascribe the Cuban attack on the U.S. shrimp boat to "timidity" of U.S. policy [Sens. Beall (R-Ill.) and Goldwater (R-Ariz.)]. Others maintain that "Americans can't be sure" what transpires regarding Cuba because of U.S. "news management" (e.g., Los Angeles Times, Providence Journal, Cincinnati Enquirer).

Defenders of the U.S. Cuba stand insist that critics "should recommend alternatives" [Sens. Mansfield (D-Mont.), Clark (D-Pa.); Rep. Stratton (D-N.Y.); AFL-CIO]. The Denver Post sees the President "attempting to end the Cuban menace in a quiet and deliberate manner by dealing with the Soviet through the usual diplomatic channels." To the Watertown Times, "there is no question but what he is following a strong policy toward Cuba" (also, Wash. Post, C.S. Monitor, Louisville Courier-Journal, ABC's Edward P. Morgan).

Several commend the President's handling of the shrimp boat incident through striking a "balance between firmness and restraint" (Wash. Star and Post, Denver Post, Phila. Inquirer).

By "its own quiet pressure," adds the Des Moines Register, the Administration "has got results...partial, to be sure," but "a reasonably satisfactory" step regarding the withdrawal of Russian forces on the island.

A majority of the general public (56%) are "satisfied with the way the Kennedy Administration has been handling the Cuba situation in recent weeks," according to the Gallup Poll (Democrats 69% satisfied; Independents, 55%; Republicans 36% satisfied, 48% "dissatisfied").

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